



CRS Parent Connection

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services



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Retired CRS director comes home to ADRS

It only took a few months for Cary Boswell, former director of Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS), to conclude that retirement was not right for him.

"After 31 years of working to provide services for people with disabilities, I really missed it. I missed the people. I missed the department. It didn't take me long to realize that I was not ready to retire," said Boswell, who left the department in spring 2006.

He came out of retirement in a big way in March when he became the new commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Already he is getting reacquainted with the department and has even attended his first statewide Parent Advisory Committee



Commissioner Cary Boswell, center, speaks at the recent statewide Parent Advisory Committee meeting



Commissioner Cary Boswell

(PAC) meeting.

The Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services unanimously approved his appointment at its quarterly board meeting in February.

Jimmie Varnado, who represents the 2nd Congressional District on the board, cited Boswell's qualifications and background as deciding factors in the selection of the Montgomery native.

"It was his overall broad experience that really made the difference for us," Varnado said. "He was a natural fit. He was someone who was familiar with the department, and the staff is familiar with him. It's like a homecoming for him."

Current CRS Assistant Commissioner Melinda Davis agrees Boswell is a great choice for the position.

"He accomplished a great deal as the CRS director," she said, referring to Boswell's legislative advocacy, his creation of a new CRS district, and the rollout of CHARMS, the program's case-management software.

"I have no doubt that he will bring that same sort of vision to his new role," Davis said.

Now, after three years of feeling "lost," Boswell said he is glad he has returned to the department and the staff that mean so much to him.

"It's good to be home again," he said.

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Parent Connection is a complimentary newsletter published by Children's Rehabilitation Service for families of children with special health care needs. The goal of this newsletter is to increase communication and share information about children with special health care needs and their families. The newsletter reflects a family-centered theme throughout and serves as a forum for family members to share information, thoughts, feelings, concerns, etc. Nothing printed or implied in this publication constitutes an endorsement by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

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From the Director's Chair



Hello, Parents and Caregivers,

It's been a hectic few months for Children's Rehabilitation Service staff as we've dealt with our budget, the beginning of the five-year "needs assessment," and a change in leadership. Here are a few details about each:

- The Legislature has ended its 2009 regular session, and I am pleased to share the news that CRS fared much better than we expected in the budget process. Although our state appropriation for FY 2010 was reduced by \$500,000, the final bottom line was in our favor. State budget writers took into account that we would receive a financial boost through savings we will realize from a lower amount in CRS matching funds needed to draw down Medicaid dollars. That change will save CRS a significant amount of money and result in an overall funding increase of more than \$120,000 over last year. When you consider the current state of the economy, and that the governor was forced to order budget cuts for all state agencies, the situation could be a lot worse. We certainly owe a debt of gratitude to Governor Riley and his budget staff, as well as state legislators, who worked to protect us as much as possible.

- If you've been looking for an opportunity to share your thoughts and feelings about Alabama's system of care for children and youth with special health care needs, now is the time! Our state is at the beginning of its "needs assessment," which is conducted every five years to identify strengths and gaps in our system of care. With resources scarce, it is especially important that we direct them into needed services.

I encourage you to participate in this important process by taking a survey. Your feedback and input will be used to help our state set priorities and plan programs that better meet the needs of children and families.

Copies of the surveys are available at your local CRS office, or if you prefer, you can complete a survey online at www.rehab.alabama.gov.

- Finally, I'm pleased to welcome Cary Boswell back to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. As many of you may recall, Dr. Boswell served for many years as the CRS director before retiring in 2006. Earlier this year, he came out of retirement to become our department's new commissioner. We in CRS look forward to working with Commissioner Boswell on strengthening the department's services for children and youth with special health care needs.

Melinda M. Davis
Assistant Commissioner, CRS

Families bond at NF Forum

From around the country, and around the world they came to the Marriot Hotel in Washington, D.C. — parents, children, medical professionals and supporters of families and friends living with neurofibromatosis (NF).

They came for the National Patient and Family Medical Symposium sponsored by the Children's Tumor Foundation and The Jeff Gordon Foundation.

It was four days of intense information on the myths, misconceptions and realities of NF.

One in 3,000 children is born with NF, and one child every six hours.

Medical professionals from across the country spoke with parents and staff from the Children's Tumor Foundation about the on-going medical research, clinical trials for treatment options, new discoveries, and ultimately a cure.

Information on clinical trials was given by University of Alabama at Birmingham's medical genetics doctor, Dr. Bruce Korf, a nationally



Families pose outside of the White House after participating in the NF Forum in Washington, D.C.

recognized leader in human genetics and internationally regarded as a leading authority in the neurodevelopment disorder.

Many people in attendance had never met another family with NF. Together they walked to the White House in support of each other,

and in hope that one day there will be a cure for this disease and many, many others.

Sharon Henderson,
Parent Consultant, Opelika

CRS Consumer Spotlight: *Monique Snell*

Monique Snell was born prematurely. While still an infant, she was diagnosed with quadriplegic cerebral palsy.

Shortly after she and her family moved to Alabama in 2000, she began receiving CRS



Monique

services at the Anniston CRS Orthopedic Clinic with Dr. Duane Tippets.

Since that time, Monique has received braces, wheelchairs and walkers through the clinic, as well as several surgeries. In May 2008, Monique graduated from Cherokee County

High School with a regular diploma. She's currently in her second semester at Gadsden State College.

This has been no small accomplishment for

this young lady who has significant mobility issues and must use a power wheelchair. Monique hasn't chosen a college major as of yet, but this highly motivated young lady appears to thrive on challenges.

Monique has attended Camp ASCCA (Alabama's Special Camp for Children and Adults) in the past and plans to attend again this summer. Also this summer, she will attend the Full Life Ahead Foundation's weekend retreat at Children's Harbor.

Monique has a very loving and supportive mother who has contributed to her daughter's success in conquering obstacles.

Monique is a delightful young lady who can be considered a wonderful role model for other individuals with cerebral palsy.

To nominate a consumer, send emails to susan.colburn@rehab.alabama.gov.

Monique's Favorites

Hobbies? Watching movies

Favorite food? Pizza

Favorite vacation? Camp ASCCA

Favorite TV show? Jon & Kate Plus 8

What would you like to do when you grow up? Be a social worker.

Alabama or Auburn? Auburn!

What can other kids learn from you about your diagnosis? "Even though you may have a disability, you can still follow your dreams."

CRS consumer receives bike through Ambucs

CindySue was born at 26 weeks gestation in a tent, while her dad, Karl, and I were camping. She is called the “Bluff Creek Baby” because of where we were located. She was only 1 pound, 9 ounces and 12 1/4 inches long.

She spent her first 4 1/2 months of life in the neonatal intensive-care unit and back and forth from Emory Children’s Hospital and the Columbus Medical Center in Atlanta.



CindySue

She had open-heart surgery at about 1 week old to repair her patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), which is a congenital heart defect. She also had many surgeries to follow, including eye surgeries for detached retinas. She was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at 1

year old. After being told it would take a lot for her to walk and function like other children her age, “if she would even do it at all,” well, she has proven them wrong.

CindySue has been going to the Opelika CRS for about five to six years for all kinds of therapies, including Feeding Clinic. She needed to attend the clinic because she only wanted to eat smooth textured foods, but it has been helping her to try new foods.

She also goes to Opelika CRS for Seating Clinic and for orthopedics with Dr. Raymond

Godsil. CRS is great because it helps me whenever I have questions or don’t know where to turn. I appreciate all of the help.

Besides needing to go to CRS, CindySue had problems hearing. She can see enough to pick up the tiny fuzz ball off of the floor. She had a cochlear implant three years ago and can hear well with it. Although she doesn’t talk, she makes all kinds of sounds and is learning to mimic sounds. Her 9-year-old sister, Heather, loves to read to her. She is 7 years old now, can stand on her own, and takes up to 10 steps by herself.

We wanted to get her a bike so she could ride with her big sister. After a lot of dead ends, we found Ambucs, an organization that provides bikes for children with special needs. They invited us to attend their “Bike-fitting Workshop,” and CindySue got to ride a bike for the very first time. She got on the bike and rode away like she had always ridden! Now with the help of The Montgomery River Region Friends of Ambucs, CindySue will receive a bike in about a month. We are so excited for her knowing that she will truly have a good summer riding bikes with her big sister.

Tammy Salm
Mother

Owning a bicycle can be quite a challenge for a family with a child who has a disability. These families cannot simply walk into a Wal-Mart and purchase a bike for \$100 and be done. Some children require specially-designed



CindySue receives help riding her new bike

bicycles and these special designs can cost an upwards of \$2,000. Thank you, Ambucs and The Montgomery River Region for your support of Lee County’s own, CindySue.

Friends of CindySue in Lee County are putting together a “task force to investigate starting our own area Ambucs chapter,” says Kelly Shaw, physical therapist. We would like to bring Ambucs bikes to Lee, Macon, Randolph, Tallapoosa, and Chamber counties. All those interested in participating may contact Kelly Shaw at (334) 528-1964 or Sharon Henderson at (334) 745-7579.

Sharon Henderson
Parent Consultant, Opelika

National parks offer people with disabilities a lifetime pass

Federal parks offer a lifetime pass for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. The pass provides access to and use of federal recreation sites that charge an entrance or standard amenity. The pass admits the pass-holder and passengers in a vehicle at per vehicle fee areas and pass-holder plus three adults, not to exceed four adults, at per-person fee areas (children younger than 16 are admitted free). The pass can only be obtained in person at the park.

Documentation is required to obtain the pass. Acceptable documentation includes: statement by a licensed physician; document issued by a federal agency such as the Veteran’s Administration, Social Security Disability Income or Supplemental Security Income; or document issued by a state agency such as the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

The Access Pass provides a 50 percent discount on some expanded amenity fees

charged for facilities and services such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and specialized interpretive services. In some cases where expanded amenity fees are charged, only the pass-holder will be given the 50 percent price reduction. The pass is non-transferable and generally does **not** cover or reduce special recreation permit fees or fees charged by concessionaires.

For more information go to store.usgs.gov/pass/access.html.

Do you have health care coverage for your children?

Parents today have a lot of hard choices. Pay the phone bill ... or pay the doctor. Fill the fridge ... or fill a prescription. Health care costs have risen significantly over the last 15 years. The State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC) reports that "nationwide, average costs paid by an employee for individual health insurance premiums have risen nearly eight times faster than average U.S. incomes."¹ But there is good news for Alabama's families!

On Feb. 4 of this year, President Obama signed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA), funding the nation's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for another four and one-half years. ALL Kids, Alabama's CHIP, is administered by the Alabama Department of Public Health, and provides low-cost, comprehensive health care coverage for eligible children younger than 19. CHIPRA will allow ALL Kids to continue enrolling eligible uninsured children.

Cathy Caldwell, director of the ALL Kids program, said, "It definitely provides adequate federal funding for us to continue enrolling children. It is our goal to see that all children in Alabama have health care coverage."

Children with health care coverage are more likely to get preventive care through annual checkups, and dental and vision care. Further, they are more likely to receive proper medical care for common childhood illnesses like sore throats, earaches and asthma.

ALL Kids shares an application form with SOBRA Medicaid and the Alabama Child Caring Program. The joint form allows one application to be considered for all three child health insurance programs. This eases the burden on the family because they do not have to try to determine the program for which their child may qualify. While eligibility is partly based on family size and income, a family of four can earn more than \$44,000 and still qualify.

There is no waiting list for ALL Kids. If approved, 12 months of continuous coverage

begins on the first day of the next month after ALL Kids receives the application. Benefits provided by ALL Kids include doctor visits, check-ups and immunizations, prescriptions, vision and dental care, hospital and physician services, and mental health and substance abuse services. Benefit coverage is provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama through its preferred provider networks. Affordable premiums range from \$50 to \$100 per child, per year. Small co-pays may be required at the time of service, but there are never any co-pays for preventive services.

Families can apply online for these programs at www.insurealabama.org. Parents can also visit the ALL Kids website at www.adph.org/allkids to get more information, follow the link to the online application or download and print out applications in both English and Spanish. Applications can be picked up at county health departments and many other health and community agencies. Families can also call ALL Kids Customer Service toll-free at 1-888-373-KIDS (5437) to request that an application be mailed to them.

Do you know of uninsured children in your area and want to do something about it, but don't know where to start? ALL Kids has regional coordinators available for support with outreach activities, presentations, and staff trainings. To find your regional coordinator, contact the ALL Kids administrative office toll free at 1-877-774-9521. You can also find this information on our website, www.adph.org/allkids/.

For more information, call ALL Kids toll-free at 1-888-373-KIDS (5437) Monday through Friday to talk to an ALL Kids customer service representative. You may also contact them by e-mail from the ALL Kids website at www.adph.org/allkids at anytime.

Knoxye Williams

Alabama Department of Public Health

¹ *At the Brink: Trends in America's Uninsured 1994-2007*, State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC) at the University of Minnesota



Wertenleki speaks at a conference in Budapest

USA genetics studies birth defect prevention

The University of South Alabama Department of Medical Genetics is researching ways to prevent birth defects and help women have healthier babies.

The school hosted an international summit in Budapest, Hungary, on preconception health that aimed at decreasing birth malformations and developmental disorders.

"Our goal is to reduce the impact of congenital malformation, including mental retardation, by developing preconception prevention strategies based on the latest medical research and reviewing data collected through birth defects surveillance," said Dr. Wladimir Wertenleki, chair of the USA Department of Medical Genetics.

For more than 20 years, the Medical Genetics Department at USA has been involved in surveillance, research, genetic counseling, and medical care for those impacted by birth defects.

The Mobile team conducts birth defects surveillance in Alabama, a successful system that was replicated in Ukraine.

Ongoing birth defects research programs in Ukraine are conducted in partnership with the USA team and investigators from centers, other universities in the United States, Ireland, France and Italy.

The surveillance work completed at USA has lead to statewide programs in Alabama such as the Alabama Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Initiative, which seeks to reduce the number of pregnancies exposed to alcohol.

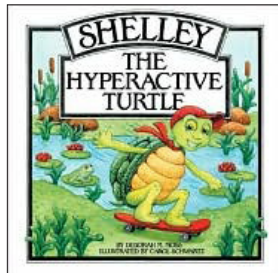
USA hosted the international summit in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the March of Dimes, and other international health agencies.

Book Review:

“Shelley: The Hyperactive Turtle”

“Shelley, The Hyperactive Turtle” was written by Deborah M. Moss and illustrated by Carol Schwartz.

This is a story about a fictional character – a young hyperactive turtle that’s so wiggly and jumpy no one wants to be around him.



At school, he agitates his classmates and teacher. He’s in and out of his desk, and he

cannot sit still or keep quiet. During lunchtime, he throws food to make kids laugh at him. Shelley realizes things are getting bad for him when no one wants to be around him at the pond, his favorite place to be.

The other kids’ parents label Shelley a troublemaker and don’t want their kids around him.

That’s when he begins to withdraw and start resenting himself.

Shelley’s mom takes him to see a doctor, and after many tests and thorough examinations, Shelley is diagnosed as “hyperactive” and having something called Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD).

The doctor explains that means some boys and girls have more trouble being quiet and keeping still than others. Having AD/HD also makes it hard to pay attention and follow direction.

The story describes what happens to Shelley after he learns he has AD/HD.

Please stop by your area Children’s Rehabilitation Service (CRS) Resource Center at the CRS office nearest you to check out this book, and some of the many wonderful books on special need diagnoses, issues, stories, consultations and insights. I promise you, you won’t regret it!

Linda Collins

Parent consultant, Andalusia



Fun Run

Patti Fassbender, Mobile CRS physical therapist, and Robert Perry, a former VRS rehab engineer, invited CRS consumers to participate in the recent Azalea Trail Fun Run in Mobile. Many of the participants are riding bikes received through CRS from Ambucs. Perry, who has since passed away because of health problems, wrote grants to obtain funding for the Ambucs bikes. Above, Patti, center, assists a consumer in riding her bike. Right, Destiny Bailey holds a sign thanking Perry. Bottom, Perry, center, poses with consumers and their families who participated in the Azalea Fun Run.





The Haire family, from left, Christy, Shelby, Tim

To a special parent

(On behalf of the child with special needs)

Thank you for believing what many will never understand,
That I am also part of God's great plan.

Thank you for always being there for me,
For helping me as I struggle towards my full potentiality.

Thank you for the countless trips to doctors and therapies,
For the endless hours spent at clinics and IEPs.

Thank you for wiping away my many tears,
For lifting my spirit after childish jeers.

Thank you for all the nights that you never slept,
While your worries and fears rushed out as you wept.

Thank you and know if you were to meet God today,
This is what I imagine he would say:

"I trusted you with my special little one,
Thank you very much for a job well done!"

Christy Haire
Parent

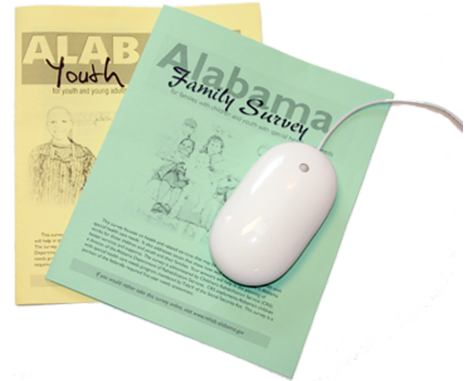
Maternal and Child Health needs assesement: We still need your help!

As many of you may know from the last issue of *Parent Connection*, it's time for the five-year Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Needs Assessment.

Each year states apply to the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau for MCH Block Grant funds. These funds are provided through Title V of the Social Security Act and are used by states for programs and policies that improve the health of women and children, including children and youth with special health needs. To make sure that programs are responding to issues that are important in local communities, each State Title V Program is required to complete a needs assessment every five years. This answers questions about health and related services that families in the state may need, and especially looks at strengths and gaps in the system. The information that is gathered helps the state set priorities and plan programs that better meet the needs of children and families.

Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) partners with the Alabama Department of Public Health to complete the Title V MCH Needs Assessment for Alabama. CRS focuses on the parts related to children and youth with special health care needs. Although the final report isn't due until July 2010, we are now gathering information and seeking input from children and youth with special health care needs and their families. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

CRS is working with Family Voices of Alabama and the University of Alabama at Birmingham



School of Public Health to conduct our part of the needs assessment. Among other things, we have created a survey that focuses directly on families who have children with special health care needs and one for youth with special health care needs. We really want to reach as many Alabama families and youth as possible! You can help by taking these surveys. Visit www.rehab.alabama.gov and select the survey that is appropriate for you.

We are so excited about looking at Alabama's system of care for children and youth with special health care needs. We want to partner with you to help our state continue to improve and better meet your needs. Your input is invaluable to the process! If you have any questions about the needs assessment or would like more information, please contact Julie Preskitt at 1-800-441-7607 or by email at julie.preskitt@rehab.alabama.gov.

Julie Preskitt, MS, OT, MPH
Special Programs Coordinator

Please add me to your newsletter mailing list.

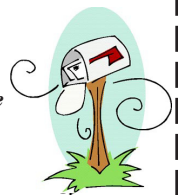
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CRS staff participate in Easter celebrations

Opelika CRS

The Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) office in Opelika brought bright smiles to the faces of some boys and girls who had the day off from school on Good Friday.

Leadership of Lee County arrived a day earlier to help set up for the party the next day.

Chick Fil-A, the Auburn Church of Christ and the Opelika CRS staff provided food and drinks. Leadership of Lee County provided Easter eggs. Pamela Galloway, CRS nutritionist in Montgomery, read an Easter story to the boys and girls.

The Easter bunny (myson, Dante' Henderson) arrived with gifts and buckets for the children to collect eggs.

Boy Scout Troop #373 participated in our Assisted Easter Egg Hunt, which the children really enjoyed. While enjoying their snacks, the children watched in amazement as Dr. Magic entertained them with a wonderful magic show, which included a very fat and cute Chinchilla.

Vertrina Grubbs, who works with Leadership of Lee County, brought her son, J. Arthur III and Madison Ashley. She had a great time.

"My children and I could not have thought of a better way to spend our Good Friday holiday,



Opelika CRS staff pose after hosting an Easter party for CRS consumers. From left to right: Kimberly Waugh, CRS care coordinator; Beverly Ford, Computer Services; Pamela Galloway, Montgomery CRS nutritionist; and Felicia Thomas, CRS care coordinator

than with the children and families at Children's Rehab for their Easter Egg Hunt & Celebration," she said. "The Easter celebration at CRS was phenomenal."

Sharon Henderson
Parent Consultant, Opelika

Jackson CRS

Initially, Thomasville Baptist Church wanted to do 25 Easter baskets for CRS consumers.

Then they said that they would definitely do 50 baskets.

When I went to pick up the baskets, there were 86!

There were also packages for the moms with lip gloss, lipstick, fingernail polish and peppermints. There were also samples of makeup and perfume.

We were on cloud nine at the Jackson CRS office. The families smiled, laughed, and just had a blast. Everyone had a great Easter.

Sharon Beech
Parent Consultant, Jackson CRS



Kim Payne, left, a CRS audiologist, discuss plans with Lynne Whisenant, director of Even Start about how to prepare for hearing screenings.

Gadsden CRS office conducts daycare hearing screenings

The Gadsden Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) office recently participated with the Etowah County Children's Policy Council Early Education and Care Work Group to provide health screenings to two day cares in Gadsden.

Kim Payne, a CRS audiologist, provided hearing screenings to children enrolled in the day cares.

Hearing screenings were also provided to more than 20 students at Even Start, which is the preschool program for the Gadsden City School System.

Emma Hereford,
Care Coordinator, Gadsden

FAMILY VOICES



Becoming a part of the health care reform discussion

Health care policy is defined by the actions taken by the federal and state governments and private insurance companies that impact health care services for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). Due to the nature and severity of their health care issues, many CYSHCN must rely on government-funded programs, particularly Medicaid, to help pay for their health care and other services. Family Voices represents 40,000 families navigating a confusing public and private health care system. The Family Voices Policy Team focuses on monitoring federal and state legislation and provides information to help families and family leaders understand and influence the legislative process. We hope you will take a minute and visit our online Legislative Action Center, capwiz.com/familyvoices/home/. This site, funded solely by private dollars, allows you to make your voice heard about health issues concerning your children. You can search to find out the names of your elected officials and how to contact them. You can also learn more about current issues and how you can make your voice heard by legislators and others. Please take this opportunity to tell your story and let those who make decisions about our children learn from your experiences because the families who live with special health care needs every day are the true experts!

MCHB announces funding for autism research

Proposal guidance has been released on a Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Autism Intervention Research Program that will support up to four two-year research projects (\$400,000 per year) on evidence-based practices for interventions to improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other developmental disabilities.

Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) is interested in research topics such as variations in access to services affecting family functioning in diverse populations; transition into adulthood, including employment and health care issues; service systems and infrastructure. Funding is also being provided for an MCH Autism Intervention Secondary Data Analysis Studies (SDAS) Program.

Visit the MCH Research website to share this



Jude White, who has autism, has received services through ADRS

information with the professionals with whom they work.

News you can use: Resources and more

Epilepsy Resources

The USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Children's Hospital Los Angeles has completed a Spanish version of "Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders: A Resource Guide for Parents." The 48-page guide was created with parent and professional input to help parents of children with epilepsy and/or a seizure disorder better understand their child's condition. The guide is divided into four sections: Understanding Epilepsy and/or Seizure Disorders; Health Care for my Child: Access to Care/Access to Services; Advocacy and Support; and Forms and Tools. Development of the guide was partially funded by MCHB, HRSA, and DHHS under Project Access.

To download a PDF copy of the resource guide in Spanish and/or English, please visit the Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California's website. To order a printed copy of the guide, please contact the Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California at (800) 632-3532. For more information on Project Access, please contact Cary Kreutzer, MPH, RD, project director at ckreutzer@chla.usc.edu or (323) 361-3830.

For information about Family Voices, please contact the Alabama state coordinators, Susan Colburn (334) 293-7041, susan.colburn@rehab.alabama.gov or Jerry Oveson (251) 438-1609, oveson@bellsouth.net.

Funderful Times – Scrapbooking

If you are an artist, you can have funderful times rain or shine, day or night. I enjoy playing with fabric, yarn, beads, and paper the most, but I have tried basket-weaving, creating mosaics, painting, and now I am learning to make stained glass. Realizing the importance of preserving the arts of the past began with a presentation of the works of Grandma Moses when I was in college. Quilting is something that is a painted canvas on fabric, when at one time they were made out of necessity.

Today we preserve every moment of our child's life through pictures. I, for example, keep a disposable camera in each car and a digital camera sitting ready on my desk. I took 1,100 photos while in Alaska last summer and 700 last month without leaving my driveway. Do I print all these photos? Of course not. Instead, I print only the ones I wish to scrapbook, make a card with, or create a piece of art using another method of media.

Scrapbooking is a wonderful way to preserve our history and our present for the future. It is an art that can cost a little or a lot. Then scrapbooking with friends brings tools to the table for sharing, not to mention delicious snacks too. With this, you are creating a wonderful social network, stress release, and doing something worthwhile with your hands. You are making something special that will be shared for many years to come.

How can you begin? I am so glad you asked, because all you need is a pack of acid-free cardstock, scissors, adhesive, and a few photos. I have made a scrapbook using an old Rolodex, an album I purchased through a scrapbook vendor, and an old license plate. The imagination has no limits. I have documented my weight loss (still a growing album I might add), vacations, holidays, our family together and individually, and even our pets. Now we are documenting an addition to our house (that I might add is a growing album in time, not space).

Preserving our family's health with scrapbooks is a wonderful tool. When our son Ethan had his first seizure at age 9, he lost all memory of his previous educational experience, playing the piano, and various people. One weekend,



Ethan Cobbs looks through a scrapbook his mother created for him

I went on a scrapbooking weekend with some girlfriends. I birthed Ethan and raised him to be 11 years old. I felt so good to have this accomplished within 90-something pages. I didn't consider the impact the scrapbook would have on Ethan. When I arrived home and showed him what I had created, his first reaction was, "Oh, mom, I might remember some of the things I had forgotten." I cried.

Then in 2006 our son Joel went through a medical crisis that included photos and emails home. Little did I realize that the emails were devotionals of our faith and strength. I am planning a bound digital scrapbook to give as a holiday gift this Christmas. Again, therapy, stress release from a tragic event can be worked through with scrapbooking. Furthermore, for digital scrapbooking there are free embellishments and background papers available online. All you need is a computer.

Documenting life events and timelines of genealogy are wonderful way to create a scrapbook. My mother and I are putting words with her traditional recipes and photos from the past to share with our family. I have taped my father's stories to add a CD to the book so that we can have his voice with us always. Scrapbooking is a wonderful tool as you can see.

When my husband, Jerry, left a teaching position with a high school, I was contracted to help with their yearbook. When I started going through years of photos boxed from previous years, I found hundreds of photos of my husband and many of his students that nobody had ever seen. I collected them, asked the students to write notes and sign their photos. I got many students from his first year of teaching who were in college at that time. I had no idea how to do a scrapbook, so I went to the library, checked out books, visited bookstores and stopped people in the scrapbooking aisle to ask how-to questions. The album was heavy and had tons of embellishments that included music notes, papers for every page and the notes and photos. I gave it to Jerry for Christmas that year. It was a joy for him and is displayed in his office today.

There are many websites to visit for additional scrapbooking details and how-to's on creating certain types of pages; however, there is no right or wrong way to creating a scrapbook. Use your imagination. I would love for you to come to my house, use my tools (which I have a weakness for), and we can share the joys, the rocks, the embellishments of reality and have a cup of chai tea with a muffin.

Rita Cobbs
Parent, Huntsville



Let's YAC About It

CRS consumers overcome obstacles, graduate

An Anniston woman who was paralyzed five years ago after being shot multiple times by an ex-boyfriend recently graduated from Jacksonville State University.

Zainab Sabree, 22, a former CRS consumer, graduated magna cum laude after earning her bachelor's degree in emergency management.



Zainab Sabree poses with Wanda Ross of CRS

Her next step is working toward earning a master's degree in public administration.

She said she is grateful to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) for helping her to reach this significant milestone in her life.

Three of ADRS' four major programs, CRS, Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS), and State of Alabama Independent Living collaborated to address her transportation, living, medical, and educational needs.

"I really thank ADRS for helping me rebuild my life by getting me out of my bed and back in school," Sabree said.

Another CRS consumer, Mandee Jones, recently graduated from Gadsden State Community College with her GED. She received assistance from Early Intervention, CRS, and VRS.

Jones, 21, was born with cerebral palsy and



Mandee Jones celebrates her graduation with members of her family

was unable to walk or talk on her own. She began using a wheelchair when she was only 3 years old.

To address her speech, the young woman uses a Dynavox, a device with a keyboard and synthesized voice that allows her to share her thoughts.

Spring Word Search

R	A	A	W	G	N	U	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	B
Z	L	Y	A	S	H	O	W	E	R	S	I	I	I	H
Q	L	B	L	O	S	S	O	M	L	G	E	R	V	I
S	E	E	D	S	T	F	L	L	H	D	D	P	W	B
X	R	A	I	N	C	O	A	T	E	S	D	A	E	M
V	B	S	A	R	E	D	N	U	H	T	A	U	V	V
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W	L	B	R	I	T	X	G	C	Q	Y	Q	N	T	B
A	I	I	Q	S	G	U	B	Q	P	S	L	R	L	O
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APRIL

BEES

BIRDS

BLOSSOM

BUGS

DAISY

EASTER

FLOWERS

INSECTS

KITE

LIGHTNING

MARCH

MUD

PLANTS

PUDDLES

RAIN

RAINCOAT

ROBIN

SEEDS

SHOWERS

SPRING

SUN

THUNDER

TULIP

UMBRELLA

WARM

WIND

WORMS

Courtesy of Songs 4 Teachers© www.songs4teachers.com



CRS Parent Connection

Children's Rehabilitation Service
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
602 S. Lawrence St.
Montgomery, AL 36104

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What's Ahead

June 24-26, 2009

Blazing New Trails, sponsored by The Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities (ACDD) and Alabama Association for Persons in Supported Employment (AL-APSE), Renaissance Montgomery Hotel. For more information call, AL-APSE at (334) 353-7713 or ACDD at (334) 242-3973.

June 27, 2009

Gadsden Support Group Family Barbecue, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., sponsored by the Spina Bifida Association of Alabama, River Walk Park (sprinkler beside Chili's), 300 Albert Raines Blvd., Gadsden. For more information, contact Angie Pate at (256) 617-1414 or angie.pate@sbaofal.org.

August 8, 2009

3rd Annual SBA of AL Golf Tournament, "Horne Family Golf Tournament," 7:30 a.m., sponsored by the Spina Bifida Association of Alabama, Eagle Point Golf Club, 4500 Eagle Point Drive, Birmingham. For more information, contact Lori Turner at (205) 370-4548 or anthonylori@bellsouth.net.

August 20, 2009

Special Education: An Overview & Individualized Education Program (IEP), 9:30 a.m. to noon, sponsored by the Alabama Parent Education Center. This free event is for families, educators, and professionals to assist in the understanding of the special education process. It will be located at Community Health Systems, 204 19th St. East, Jasper. To reserve a place, please call (334) 567-2252 or (866) 532-7660 (toll free) by Aug. 13.

Oct. 9, 2009

Spina Bifida Conference, "Bridges to Independence," sponsored by the Spina Bifida Association of Alabama and The Children's Hospital (TCH) in Birmingham. For more information, contact Betsy DeCesare at (205) 939-5281, Betsy.DeCesare@chsys.org or Angie Pate at (256) 295-0757, angie.pate@gmail.com.

Local PAC meetings: Check your local CRS office for dates and times of meetings in your area.